

Kari overall-senate ed testimony, monday, january 14, 2019

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for inviting us to speak today. My name is kari overall and i am the president of the idaho education association. I am a 15 year veteran educator from boise. I am here on behalf of iea members from across the state. Our membership is a terrific cross-section of early career and veteran teachers, elementary and high school teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, librarians, paraprofessionals, and school counselors. We have members from large, small, urban, and remote districts. We value the expertise, insight, and opinions of all of these dedicated professionals. Teachers know best what they need to be successful in the classroom and what can help them reach and inspire students.

One of the priorities of the iea is the recruitment and retention of quality educators and working to ensure they are provided with the tools to help them succeed and stay in the classroom. The state board of education released its second teacher pipeline report last month. During 2017-2018, the state department of education issued over 1900 teaching certificates. Of those issued, 35% did not teach in idaho during the 2017-2018 year. The report also shows idaho has an attrition rate of 10% each year, which exceeds the national average. In addition to having a large

percentage of those certified never teach in the state, 10% of those who do teach leave each year. We urge lawmakers to read this report and we look forward to partnering to create supports for educators to ensure Idaho can lower its attrition rate and retain the best and brightest educators. Idaho can and must do more to ensure every student regardless of where they live has access to a highly qualified teacher.

Next on IEA's priority list is ensuring Idaho public schools are funded by a system that is transparent and flexible but which also fulfills the Idaho constitutional requirement to fund a general, uniform, and thorough system of public, free, common schools. We remain firm in the resolve there should not be winners and losers among school districts and the state must work to alleviate the increased burdens on local communities to fund public schools. Currently 93 out of 115 school districts rely on supplemental levies totaling over \$200 million. These levies support additional compensation for educators, programs for students, and smaller class sizes. The new funding formula must increase the amount provided by the state in a substantial way. Regardless of the formula used, the formula must also protect public dollars only going to public schools. The IEA remains firmly opposed to any form of tax credit, voucher, or any other

proposal which syphons public tax dollars away from public schools to private schools.

As we look at 2017-2018, idaho public schools are doing great work with the resources provided. lea members see advances in student growth and achievement nearly every day. Too often student growth and achievement are seen only as increases in test scores. There is more that must be factored into the equation than simply test scores. Students demonstrate growth and learning through a variety of assessments, behaviors, and activities in the classroom. We encourage legislators to look beyond just test scores and see the full picture provided by districts, schools, and individual students. If you have not yet taken a look at the new statewide school reportcard which the state department released this fall, please do so. There is a much richer picture of what is happening in schools beyond just test scores. In addition, please visit the schools in your districts. Classrooms are laboratories for creativity, exploration, experimentation, and innovation. Our students and educators cannot be painted with just one color.

If we could make any policy changes, we would like them to stem from the next task force proposed by governor little- our kids, idaho's future. The previous governor's task force addressed many important

issues. We urge the legislature to fund the governor's budget request for the new task force. We believe the collective voices of stakeholders will collaborate to propose innovative solutions to current issues, including veteran teacher pay, further collapsation of line items within the public schools budget, and innovative practices which will free up teachers to do what they do best, teach. We would also like to see the task force dive deeper into the recruitment and retention statistics. With over 1/3rd of those certified not teaching in the state, we would like to see the task force propose solutions to this recruitment issue to ensure more educators want to stay and teach in idaho.

The iea implore's you this legislative session to make policy decisions through the lens of creating equal opportunity and access for all students regardless of where they live in the state. Poverty, geography, ethnicity, disability, nor access to technology should not determine what type of education a student receives in idaho.

The iea stands ready, willing, and committed to working together to ensure every child is taught by a well-trained, highly qualified teacher and that idaho's classrooms are funded by a general, uniform, and thorough system. We look forward to working with this committee, the legislature at

large, and the education stakeholders to ensuring every student leaves
idaho public schools prepared for college or career next steps.

Thank you.